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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: IAEA ARREARS AND IRAN VOTE

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1B. BUENOS AIRES 141  
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11. (U) Ambassador delivered talking points on the upcoming IAEA Board of Governors meeting and Argentina's arrears to the IAEA to Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana on January 24. As in previous discussions with Taiana on the Iranian nuclear program (reftels b and c), the Ambassador underscored the threat posed to international peace and security by Iran's defiance of the IAEA. Noting Argentina's vote in the BOG could be critical, he urged the GoA to quickly resolve its assessment arrears with the IAEA in order to regain voting privileges.

12. (SBU) Taiana confirmed that the Foreign Ministry had requested that the Economy Ministry make the payment of the arrears. Taiana noted that Cabinet Chief Alberto Fernandez had yet to authorize the appropriate budget disbursements to meet obligations, not only to the IAEA, but also for internal Ministry functions, e.g. salaries. The Ambassador asked Taiana if he thought it would be helpful if he (the Ambassador) phoned Fernandez to stress the importance of paying the arrears. After some thought, Taiana replied that it would be helpful.

13. (SBU) Subsequently, during the afternoon of January 24, the Ambassador spoke with Cabinet Chief Fernandez. The Ambassador reminded Fernandez of the GoA's previous support of the EU-3 position in the IAEA and the importance of Argentina's participation in the upcoming BOG meeting. Fernandez said he understood the magnitude of the problem and that he would try to help.

14. (SBU) On January 24, the Ambassador also spoke with Economy Minister Felisa Miceli as requested in reftel a. Miceli acknowledged that the GoA was in arrears to a large number of international organizations. She said she understood the particular importance of the IAEA issue and was going to try to resolve the IAEA issue "in time," i.e. before the February 2 meeting.

15. (SBU) We will follow up with GoA interlocutors on a daily basis and inform the Department on the status of the GoA payment.

GUTIERREZ